DISCUSSION QUESTIONS · HIGH SCHOOL

You Must Be Born Again

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 09 · November 8, 2026

LEADER SNAPSHOT

Big idea: Nicodemus came to Jesus with every religious credential Israel had to offer, and Jesus told him he could not see the kingdom of God unless he was born again. New birth is the Spirit's work, promised in Ezekiel 36, and it comes by looking in faith to the Son of Man lifted up, like the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

Read together: John 2:23–3:15 · Ezekiel 36:25–27 · Daniel 7:13–14 · Numbers 21:4–9. Memory verse: John 3:3.

Time: 25–30 minutes. Let them wrestle with question 9. The goal is honesty about what they are actually trusting, not a right answer.

WARM UP

1. **Pastor Jeff asked, "Are you more concerned about appearing right before other people than actually being right with God?" Where do students feel the most pressure to look like they have it together?**
   John 2:25: Jesus "knew what was in man." You might fool the people around you, even yourself, but not Him.

THE CONVERSATION

2. **Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, and "the teacher of Israel" (3:10). Why would a man like that come to Jesus at night?**
   To avoid being seen, and because something was stirring in him. All his religious effort had left him unsettled.
3. **Nicodemus opened with flattery: "We know that you are a teacher come from God." Jesus didn't respond to the compliment. Why do you think He went straight to new birth?**
4. **The Pharisees built fences of extra rules around God's law. Pastor Jeff said that in trying to protect themselves, they ended up disobeying God's law through their exaggerated reverence for it. Where do Christians still do this today?**

NEW BIRTH

5. **The word translated "again" in v. 3 (*anōthen*) can also mean "from above." Nicodemus heard "a second time." How do both meanings help explain what Jesus is saying?**
   New birth really is a second birth, and its source is God, not us.
6. **Read Ezekiel 36:25–27. How does it explain "born of water and the Spirit" (3:5)?**
   Clean water for cleansing, a new heart, and God's Spirit within. It's God's promise, not a ritual.
7. **Pastor Jeff compared it to a heart transplant: diet and exercise are good, but they can't replace a failing heart. Where are you tempted to "improve" what God says must be made new?**

LOOK AND LIVE

8. Read Numbers 21:4–9 and John 3:14–15. What does the bronze serpent teach about how we are saved?

The bitten didn't cure themselves. They looked to what God provided and lived. The power was in God's remedy, not in the strength of the look.

SO WHAT

9. Pastor Jeff asked, "Are you trusting in what Jesus has done for you, or what you've done for Jesus?" Be honest: if Jesus asked what makes you right with God, what would your first answer be?

Nicodemus didn't get it all at once either (7:50–51; 19:39). Honesty is the starting point.

THIS WEEK

Memorize John 3:3, and write down one thing you've been trusting to make you right with God instead of Jesus. Then cross it out and pray, "Jesus, I look to You."

Next week: Week 10 · The Love That Saves · John 3:16–21 · November 15, 2026